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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet contains quoted viewpoints of minority group members, and aims to bring the philosophy of revolutionary Marxist-Humanism into a direct dialectical relationship with the movement for liberation which is coming from minorities, women, colonial peoples, and the working masses. [One article in this pamphlet, "Los Chicanos" is in Spanish.] (DM)

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BLACK, BROWN AND RED

the movement for freedom amonq black, chicano and indian

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A News & Letters Pamphlet

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Introduction

Who doesn't know that in this racist USA Blacks are still the lowest paid and get the dirtiest jobs inside the shops, while outside the shops the rate of unemployment among Blacks is still twice that of whites? Who doesn't know that Black women "have a double dose of it because they are Black workers and because they are women, exploited both ways"? Who doesn't know that the Chicanos are in the same rut in the areas where they constitute the largest minority, and their culture counts for nothing in white society? Who doesn't know that the only true Americans-the Indians-are the most exploited, the most degraded, the most ignored, the most abandoned of all?

What isn't known is the multitude of ways that all these exploited forces fight the system every day of their lives, what they feel and what they think – especially what they think. It is these voices of revolt, these new passions for a different life, these new thoughts of what to do, that this pamphlet is all about. To listen to them is to enrich your own life so that we can work out together what to do and how to do it.

How not to divide up our forces, with each acting separately, is the real problem. The question is how, in uniting, to make sure that we do not once more separate thought from deed, or the passion for change from the forces that will do the changing.

In the voices that you will hear in this pamphlet you may recognize your own – not only as something that you have experienced, but also as the hunger for a philosophy of liberation that is as strong as the desire for freedom itself. It is this total opposition to the racist and exploitative society we live in that is the key to the problems in society as a whole. It is a cry against a society which refuses humanity is **human quality**. This need is not a desire for some shadowy abstraction, but has taken the form of a universal movement that would make freedom and reason the reality of the day.

In a most concrete and dramatic way, this seeking for a philosophy of liberation, is expressed in the new consciousness of self that has come into being among Blacks, Chicanos, American Indians, women, production workers, students, and prisoners. By their activity they have forced the country to recognize their existence and thereby have made their cause the paramount political and the philosophical question of the day.

Soledad brother, George Jackson, in the crisis of his imprisonment discovered himself, his mind, and the world. He wrote in **Soledad Brother** that he and other Black inmates were "attempting to transform the Black criminal mentality into a Black revolutionary mentality"*

Let us look at the tragedy of the death of George Jackson. As against Che who became a martyr while sowing illusions of shortcuts to revolution, this revolutionary was forced to his actions by that Devil's prison run by Reagan. Anyone who heard the warden of that infamous penal colony knows the dangerously armed moron is like. And to think that so sensitive and profound a man as Jackson had to bow and be brutalized by such a monster makes one's blood boil, and know in his heart of hearts that he or she would have preferred death. Without a shred of doubt, that characteristic state institution of Reagan's California harbored the murderers, the political assassins matched only by Nazism. And no one would dare to have told Jackson he should have done this, and not that, to remain alive.

But for us to really tear down that Bastille, something more — a great deal more serious than either the Black Panther's gun manual or the Weatherman Underground's bombs — and even a great deal more than prison rebellion — is needed. Whether they delude themselves that thereby they "make" the revolution, or not, it is hardly what Jackson — who discovered Marx in the hell-hole — would have considered the proper tribute to his aspiration for remaking the world, and not just its prisons.

Listen to the Soledad Mothers speak for themselves, as they appealed for people to attend the trial of the two remaining Soledad Brothers:

*See **Soledad Brother** by George Jackson, Bantam Books, New York, 1970 and **If They Come In The Morning** by Angela Y. Davis and other political prisoners, The Third Press, New York, 1971.

Mrs. Inez Williams:

> It looks like a prison camp. Everyone in there is grinning while holding shotguns and belt sticks. There are men walking around with machine guns. It's frightening. If my son wasn't there I'd stay away. I can understand why people are not coming.
>
> But we've got to show them, that they are not going to stop us. They want to do their dirty work so no one knows what they are doing. I'm begging for your support; we need your dollars, but more than anything in the world we need you. We need people in that courtroom and I don't mean 18 and 20 year olds. We need some 45 year olds and 65 year olds in that courtroom, adult citizens. My son's life is at stake!

Mrs. George Jackson

> We cannot let these two men, and all the other men in prison go quietly to the gas chamber, to their death in prison, because prison is a living death. Prison reforms, and prison law schools and anything connected with the prisons is not going to make it! The only thing to do with the prisons is to tear them down, because they are not there to help anybody. If anybody wants to help me tear them down, I'm willing.
>
> I can't understand how people will go into their house and sit down and rationalize all this mess away. This country belongs to the people. When are the people going to stand up and say, 'This is my country, and I don't like what's going on?'
>
> How many more people do we have to have killed? How many more of us have to go to prison and live a living death? How many more of us have to go home and turn away our heads and try to forget what's going on and what's happening to us?

The crucial point is not that the Blacks at Soledad and Attica consider themselves "political prisoners", but that jails and penitentiaries are now included in the totality of the American capitalist crisis. And at the very center of this prison crisis, as in other facets of American life, is the Black Dimension with its consciousness of the need for radical social change.

The Panthers electrified the American Black youth by bringing in the new category of self defense. In 1967 the Black Panthers (BPP) went up to Sacramento to lobby, with their guns, against a bill that would prohibit carrying firearms within the limits of a city. They walked in with their guns and frightened the hell out of the legislators, who immediately passed anti-firearm

laws. Of course this was great publicity, and many Black youth who saw this on TV said, "Wow! Right on!" and went out and joined the Panther Party. They did not join the BPP because of Mao's little red book, but because of the BPP's direct dramatic action against an institution of capitalism. This eagerness to join the BPP came from a far deeper experience than just that dramatic show of weapons. It was drawing upon the past eleven years of the historic Black liberation struggles, beginning with the Civil Rights Movement of 1956, through to the Black Power movement and reaching a high point in 1967, the year the nation "discovered" the BPP, when the spontaneous uprising of the Blacks in Detroit ceased to be just a struggle between Black and white, but bore a class character as well.

The enthusiasm that the Black youth had for the BPP has been hopelessly dampened by the structure and the "philosophy" of the Party, both Huey Newton's and Eldridge Cleaver's brands which are counter to the native grounds of the Black revolution. Here is how an ex-Panther, a young Black woman who still has great respect for the Panthers and is still active in the Angela Davis Defense Committee puts it: "We would read Mao by paragraphs and the Minister of Education would explain it to us. I dug this education, reading from Mao, but somehow it didn't seem to relate to our condition. We began to think that all of this was just a front for doing nothing revolutionary. We would talk about this among ourselves but would not go to our leaders and tell them this."

This is not an opposition to theory, but rather a desire for total revolutionary change. Her simple statement goes far to explain the central crisis of Black liberation in the U.S. The need for a philosophy of revolution, connected to Black existence, and the Black struggle for liberation, instead of the backwardness of the masses of Black people as indicated by Huey Newton who believes the masses have to be spoon-fed on a survival program.

Marx long ago pointed out that man's consciousness is determined by his social existence, but at no time did Marx construe this to mean that man could not, by his activity, change both his consciousness and his existence. If, by achieving self-consciousness, man becomes aware of his oppression, he also becomes aware of its opposite, freedom. And it is this, the very idea of freedom, that has spurred men into both practical and theoretical activities toward that end.

The Black mass movement toward liberation always carried with it a movement toward "totality", that is to say, not only a change in the relationship of man to man but a change in the very quality of man himself. Franz Fanon

saw the purpose of the African revolutions as, not to create another state, another Black bourgeoise, shaped like the European bourgeoise, but to **create an entirely different man**. What Fanon was getting at, in the context of the African revolution has been the crucial problem facing both Blacks and whites in this country.

See if you do not recognize our problem in the way Fanon expressed it in **The Wretched of the Earth**:

> The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is it's guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension ... The responsibility of the African as regards national culture is also the responsibility with regard to African-Negro culture....It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows.

This is true both negatively and positively. We see the Black dimension as a revolutionary, international dimension. Racism, like imperialism, is also an international phenomenon. In the struggle against it, the way the workers unite—whether they be the shipyard workers of the Clydeside in Glassgow, or of Nagasaki; whether they be auto workers of Detroit, or of Toyota; whether they be African women or the American Women's Liberation — shows that we are living in one world. It is one world divided in two — but the division is within each country, between the wretched of the earth and those who rule over them.

The red thread of self-activity, self-development and self-organization that has run throughout history, has shown the Black masses as vanguard, and has expressed itself in the last decade at every stage of development — from the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, to the Fleetwood Revolutionary Committee in Detroit, Mich. The movement is revolutionary by its very nature, so revolutionary that even its leaders have had to recognize it.

This shock of recognition was described in these terms by Dr. King: "The Negro masses in the South began to re-evaluate themselves, a new process that was to change the nature of the Negro community and doom the social patterns of the South. From this point on, the South's terrible peace was rapidly undermined by the Negro's new courage and thinking and its ever increasing readiness to organize to act."

It is not by accident that from his jail cell Soledad Brother George Jackson opposed the wild use of anti-white epithets and demanded that Blacks recognize that there are revolutionary allies among the whites. As he put it: "Who is the Black working for, who does he love when he screams 'Honky?' He would throw us into a fight where we would be out-numbered 1 to 14 (counting the Blacks who would fight with/for the other side in a race war). War on the Honky, it's just another mystification..."

What this pamphlet aims to do is to bring the philosophy of revolutionary Marxist-Humanism into a direct dialectical relationship with the movement for liberation which is coming from Black people and other minorities, women, colonial peoples, and above all, the working masses who are the power that will decide the birth of the new world of men and women.

Black people today are living in the age of Nixon. Nixon is attempting to turn back the clock, attempting to re-segregate the schools, leading the most racist attacks against Black people on the welfare issue. White labor is also living in the age of Nixon, feeling the weight of all his anti-labor attacks, and angry enough to act.

This pamphlet does not pretend to have all the answers. What it does hope to show is the direction needed to work out the answers. The worker who tells of "A Black Worker's Life" wants to know: "What are we going to do about the things that are happening? We've been talking about organizing some kind of caucus. What we need is for the worker to feel that somebody is behind them."

What we hope is that this pamphlet can become part of the mediation between the Black caucuses, the Chicano organizations, the associated Indian committees, the youth, the anti-war forces, the women's liberation groups —all directed to uprooting capitalist society, root and branch — and creating, at the same time, a new truly human society.

John Alan
Black-Red View Columnist News & Letters

Black Workers

Four years have passed since the 1967 explosions. For a few months it looked as if Whitey had got the message. Young Blacks were hired at many plants. All kinds of committees were formed--like the New Detroit Committee that was supposed to see about retraining and changing conditions within the unemployed ranks and in the shops.

Everyone, from the newspapers to the politicians, from the company presidents to the union leaders, wants to speak for the workers. Let's listen to them speak for themselves.

> I work at a Chrysler plant outside Detroit. In the past month they have been hiring. Hiring nothing but white people. They have hired two Black guys and got one from the pool, out of a total of about 75 new people. They hired new women--but only white women. Black women came out there, and Black men too. One Black man I know went out there and the guard told him that they weren't taking any applications, but at the same time white boys were driving right through the gate and putting applications in.

The same sort of story comes from another Black UAW member in Los Angeles.

> I have worked at a couple of aircraft plants in the past few years. At one, I had to go down five times after applying for the job to get in. Each time I was supposed to take welding tests, but the man who was to give them wasn't around. Finally, another worker said, 'Are you going to hire him or not? He has been here five times.' So they hired me as a maintenance welder.
>
> In another place, I was the only Black welder. After working there a while, I was transferred out to another job. While I was gone, everyone got a raise except me. I asked about it and they said it was a paperwork bottleneck and would be fixed. When I asked again, they said I was a troublemaker. Soon after, they laid me off.

The workers feel that the union never does anything for them. A Black worker in Detroit put it this way:

> It is impossible for Black workers to get any satisfaction from this union. It has gotten to the point where some workers are saying that if the union won't fight the company, we should get some shotguns and rifles and go take over our local union hall and hold it until we get to talk to Woodcock.

Some are also questioning seniority, which they claim is run by the book when it benefits whites, and thrown away when it would help Blacks. Black caucuses in California aircraft plants, where Blacks were hired only recently, and wiped out with the first cutbacks, have been calling for 12 percent Black, 14 percent Chicano, in all departments no matter what cutback.

A 63 year old woman, who has been active in the NAACP and a worker all her life, says:

> I was a janitor in Seattle. Many Blacks were janitors, and when they became organized into a union, Blacks were compelled to join. But none of them had any power in the unions. It seemed that as the white working brothers were able to secure shorter working hours and higher wages and more fringe benefits, we were pushed out more and more. There is a kind of feeling I sense today that we are not really going to get the better society we are working for by working with other workers.

A Black worker in Detroit, just retired, disagrees.

> Something has to be done about the racism in the seniority system, but it's dangerous to say just throw out seniority. There are alot of Black workers in the UAW today who wouldn't be there if it weren't for seniority. There's alot of maneuvering and collusion, but to throw it out would mean hell.

Black Workers Question the Union

When the CIO was born, in the 1930's, it was Black and white together that seized the plants and forced the company to treat workers like human beings instead of just so many pieces of machinery. But today many workers, Black and white, feel that the union isn't the same, that it is the disciplining agent of the workers, that it sides with the companies, that it has been transformed into the opposite of what it was when it started.

I work in the Dearborn Assembly Plant (DAP) at Ford Rouge. I'm paying $7.98 a month in union dues. Our whole building pays about $28,000 a month to the UAW. The DAP is predominantly Black, and yet we see little or none of our money invested for the betterment of the Black community or for Black workers in the shops. All we get for our money is excuses. One Black brother in our building was given 30 days off for absenteeism. He brought in a doctor's letter, but it was refused. This happened several times. The bargaining committee refused to appeal his grievance.

Another worker got 30 days off for being late. He had a family emergency. This brother asked his committeeman, who is white, to write a grievance. It was never written. After two weeks, the committeeman told the man to come in. He took him to see this foreman and told him to beg and apologize so he could get back to work.

Even Black committeemen don't escape racist treatment. In the DAP, a Black committeeman who had filed many grievances was told to meet with a bunch of department heads alone. He refused to go unless a bargaining committeeman accompanied him. They all said they were too busy. When he didn't show up, Ford management gave him a week off.

Here is the way one young Black worker at Fleetwood views the union, where he feels it has gone:

They have many racist foremen and general foremen at Fleetwood, mostly from Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina--all over the South. They came up North in the late 40's and early 50's and now they are in controlling positions in **both** the plant management **and** the union. Their views and attitudes haven't changed. They hate all Black people, but especially the young Blacks who will stand up and fight for their rights. I foresee that you will have a revolution in the auto industry in the near future, in the ranks of the union.

"Hot, Heavy, Dirty"

In every plant and mill in auto and steel where more than a token few Blacks are employed, there are some departments that are virtually all-white, where the work may be a little easier, a little cleaner, or a little safer; and there are those departments called "HHD--hot, heavy, dirty", where Black workers are concentrated.

Listen to the voices of workers from just one predominantly Black department--the Fleetwood body shop. Not every worker in it is Black, and the whites there are in the same boat, but it is a typical "Black Department" in the auto plants.

I have been in the body shop for nine long years, and I know some brothers who have been there a lot longer than me. One older worker I know was working on the wheelhouse job. The way this job is set up now, you have to lift the wheelhouse off hooks and put them on the table. Then you put on a strip, weld them, take them off, and you still have to catch the line. If the line runs 400 jobs for eight hours, you weld 200 jobs and load 200. As fast as this man can weld, the line goes faster. You don't even have time to catch your breath or go to the bathroom. My job isn't much better than his. I am missing one or two days nearly every week. I can't afford to be missing days, but I have to or I'll drop dead.

* * *

A man I know in department 3 (body shop) was burned by welding sparks twice in one night. He went to medical. The second time the nurse called labor relations and they took him to the blue room. They told him he was taking too many medicals, and accused him or 'wasting the company's time.' The committeeman said there was nothing he could do to stop it. One worker brought a note from his doctor that his back was bad and they transferred him the next day--to the heaviest job in the department!

* * *

We are working five guns each where I work. Last year they worked 'only' two guns. No one can keep up. There is no more 'going in the hole' . You start in the hole and finish in the hole. The speed is so bad that accidents are coming more and more often. Any time a man has to work more than eight hours, he is a safety hazard. One worker was hit in the head with a gun reel for this reason. He could have been killed, and if things don't change someone will be.

Once a Black worker has been placed in an HHD department it is nearly impossible to get out. The company and the union combine to make the transfer an endless series of stalls, red tape, "procedure" and outright discrimination. Here is one man's tale of how not to get out of the body shop:

I have had a 63B (transfer form) in for months to get transferred to a checking job. One time I went to see where I stood on it and I was 11th from the top. One month later I had the committeeman check the list again, and he said I was 7th. Then I heard that two or three guys went into checking--so I figured I was close to getting out of the body shop after all these years.

Well, I asked again another month later and they said: 'You're 15th now.' I would like to know how they're dealing the cards, from the bottom? Everyone knows they have whites in checking with less seniority than I have, and they've gone on checking recently.

A younger worker commented:

I know checking in that department. If they have 15 or 20 whites there, they'll let in two or three Blacks so they can say 'Look, we've got your people there.'

Black and White

There is alot of discussion on the relationship between white and Black workers.

The company believes that Black people can always do just a little bit more than white people. Whites will say: 'I can't do that job!' And the foreman will go along with them. But if a Black man can't do the job they get rid of him. Any job I don't keep up, whether it hurts me or not, they say 'keep it up or you're out'! The general foreman told my foreman that the first time my job is in the hole, to send me upstairs and I'll be on the street.

Another worker had a different viewpoint:

When the union was formed, quite a few white workers understood what it meant. They couldn't be so easily used as they can today. The production process--the grind--is so bad today that it forces some workers, Black and white, to accept from the company some way that he can make his day easier. There are some whites who have always been company supporters.

But on some jobs there are white workers that are catching hell, just like the Black workers in their group. These whites on my job are young; they didn't come up through the union movement, and

two of them are Southerners, but they are just as close with the Black workers on issues like speed-up as anybody.

In the mills and in the auto shops, Black workers have taken actions in support of white workers' demands, and have tried to open a dialogue with them. At Bethlehem Steel's mill near Baltimore, they formed a group called the Committee for Equality, outside the union. They knew the government gave the mill about $50 million a year in contracts, so they tried to expose the illegal racism and threatened the company. It worked; the company began to make a lot of changes to let Black workers get out of the all-Black units of the mill. A white steelworker there commented:

> A lot of white guys who had grievances against the local union began to think differently about the Black workers. Now they want to join them so they can get their own problems settled.

And a worker in Detroit put it this way:

> Whether you are Black or white, if you work in the body shop you are in danger of losing your life. Working in the body shop is like combat in Vietnam. You work like a slave in there.
>
> I would like to say something to the white workers at Fleetwood. Many of them have run to Taylor and Southgate to live in all-white neighborhoods. The real estate men charge the white workers top dollar for the promise that no Blacks will move in.
>
> I know many white workers who are buying houses out there that they can't afford; the payments are too high. They are in such a spot financially that they can't strike, even if the company works them to the bone. This makes life harder for all the workers, Black and white. The only people it helps is GM and the real estate men.
>
> You can't escape Black people forever, so why hurt yourself and us by trying?

A Black Worker's Life

> We have quite a problem out at my plant and at most factories around here in Flint. We're fighting the age-old problem of racism and low work standards. I can tell you about my experience and it'll be enough.
>
> My problem started a year ago, right after the strike. I was doing a job on one side, and a white worker was doing the job on the other

side. It was too much work. We couldn't keep it up. The foreman and the general foreman were complaining, and they would always tell **me**; they would never say anything to the white boy. Sometimes they would harass me for maybe 20 minutes at a time. This went on for something like 3 or 4 months. It come to a point where I couldn't take it any more, where I was about to explode and I was afraid that I would hurt someone in there. I went on sick leave.

Before I left, we had a grievance on the job. And when I came back it wasn't really a killer job. You would still put in an honest day's work, but you didn't have to work your head off. But the minute I got this job, the general foreman started complaining that there wasn't enough work on this job. And he started the whole process again. They switched the whole job around, and added more work on it. He comes to me again and threatens me. The only time he said anything to the white boy, he would be talking about fishing--but they were steady harassing me. I didn't want to go on sick leave again. I couldn't run. The general foreman told me personally, I'm going to put you on a job where when you do get a decent job, you will appreciate it. He broke the job up; he gave part of it to one person, a little bit to another person, and scattered it around. He put the white boy on a job where most of the time you walk around with your hands in your pockets. I'll give you a brief description of the job he gave me.

I had a wrench, a drill and a bag of screws hanging around my waist. And I would have to jump up in the back of the car, tighten two bolts, shoot two screws, knock out 5 holes, put the insulation in, straighten it out, collect all my scrap, pick up my wrench and my drill and jump out of the car, throw the material in a basket somewhere along the line. We were running 72 jobs an hour. I felt I couldn't do this either. I went on sick leave again.

During the time I was on sick leave, I ran into **News & Letters.** The UAW couldn't help me. The UAW is weak, I think it's more or less a traditional thing. My friends at **N & L** put me in touch with some people, and I filed a civil rights complaint against this general foreman, for harassment and discrimination. Finally the civil rights people started investigating. When I went back, they put me on the same job, but I wasn't harassed like I had been. The general foreman was afraid to say anything to me. He would just stand and look. But it had gotten to the point where he didn't have to say anything. I just looked at him and I wanted to kill him.

I was trying to get them to fire me, because if they fired me, then I could make it. I could draw compensation or unemployment.

But they wouldn't fire me. I tried with all my might. I would come in come day and take off two, come back the next day and take off the next two--but they never said anything to me once.

Then I fell and hurt my back. They're trying to say now that I did it intentionally, but I really would like to work. It's disgusting to know that a man can't go to the job and be happy. I don't mind working; I'd really like to work. I have a family to support and everything that goes with that. But I'm not going to do a job this man has put me on for punishment. I'm not going to kill myself, just to satisfy someone else.

There are alot of people in there who are having trouble. They will go to the UAW, and the UAW will say: 'Don't worry, we'll take care of it after awhile, sooner or later'. They are dead right then. The problem is, what are we going to do about this sort of thing that is happening?

A trick that they use to keep the Black workers contained is that if a Black is complaining about the job, they will take a white guy and put him on the job and tell him, 'if you do this job for me, for a couple hours or a day, I will give you a good job. But I've got to have you do this job so I can keep this nigger straight'. The next day or even that afternoon, he'll put you right back on that job and you'll be stuck there.

We've been talking about organizing some kind of caucus. We passed out some leaflets that had quite an impact on the workers. What we really need is to make workers feel that somebody is behind them; that they've got somebody to fall back on.

Otherwise, I'm afraid that what's going to happen is what happened in Detroit, at Chrysler--somebody is going to get killed. In the last couple of months, the doctor has been beaten up; a couple of general foremen; a couple of foremen. It's getting to the point where people are beginning to get violent. With me, every time that they get me to the point where I feel as if I'm getting riled up enough to fight, I leave. But I don't know about others.

I don't think people realize how workers are being treated in the auto shops. I think we're forgotten. They feel that 'they've got the UAW to take care of them.' But the UAW is not taking care of us. The UAW is taking care of itself. The company and the UAW have air-conditioned offices. They provide them with a coffee pot and they sit back all day with their heels propped up on the desks, while we are out there working like dogs.

Management seems to be able to buy anybody they want to. I don't think a company should be allowed to get as big as General

Motors. They have too much political force. When it really got bad in the factories was when Nixon took office. Tricky Dicky's their boy.

Revolt in the Shops

There is rebellion in the shops every day against racism and the conditions of work. The rebellion takes many forms: from attacks on foremen to opposition electoral campaigns; and from Black caucus activity to wildcat strikes. No one can possibly predict from day to day what new forms workers will create to express their total opposition to the factory-jail. The one thing every worker agrees on is that revolt will go on because there is no alternative to revolt.

Last year at Chrysler's Eldon Axle plant, a Black worker named Johnson actually did kill two foremen and another worker. During his trial, one young worker said:

> The people in my shop talk about the Johnson trial. They say the same thing is going to happen one day in this plant. Everybody has sympathy for the man, even though they don't think he's a hero or anything. They know you can be pushed to the point where you are not responsible.

Sometimes the fury of the workers comes out in local union elections. In the 1971 local elections, many presidents were kicked out by the membership. One worker explained:

> The main thrust of local union rank-and-file members this year seems to be aimed at poor working conditions and union misrepresentation. So far, without exception in Chrysler plants, the same pattern shows up in plants where unrest led to wildcat strikes. The wildcat strikes had to be called because the United Auto Workers Union will not authorize a strike unless they want something from the corporation.
>
> For example, Eldon Axle had a wildcat and UAW bureaucrats ordered the striking workers back to work.
>
> **This same Chrysler plant was the scene where two bosses and one worker were shot to death in the plant by another worker who had been harassed by management and then sent home for disciplinary action.** This trial recently ended, with the jury judging the worker innocent of murder for reason of insanity--after they visited the

plant and saw the conditions the workers had to work under, and this was after management had been working night and day for weeks to clean up just the filth in the factory, to say nothing of the speed of the work.

The rank-and-file of this troubled plant defeated the president on the first ballot.

Next door, at Dodge Forge, there had been a strike over poor working conditions. There was the same script: the president went along with the UAW bureaucrats in ordering the men back to work. The membership defeated this president on the first ballot.

Sterling Stamping plant had a wildcat strike. The UAW said 'Return to Work!' The president of the local union said 'Hell No!' Result: the president was re-elected by a big vote.

Chrysler Centerline parts plant had a wildcat strike and many young workers were fired. The UAW said to return, the president said hell no. The president was re-elected.

Absent from these elections was the question of race. Whites replaced some Blacks, and Blacks replaced some whites--where it took the votes of all to win. The workers were looking at the records of their officers, not their color this time as much as they have in recent years.

The disgust with the old leadership is so great that even scare tactics don't work anymore. At Ford Rouge's Dearborn Assembly Plant, a Black worker ran for unit president against several "leaders" who already held office. The membership was just fed up; they didn't want any of the old crowd. In the run-off election, the white ex-president tried to turn the white workers against the Black candidate by a whispering campaign that said he was a "Black Panther" and that if he was elected, white workers wouldn't get any help. It didn't work.

Black Caucuses, Black Shop Paper

1969 was the year in which Black caucuses, Black wildcats and Black shop newspapers really exploded in shops across the country. At the Ford plant in Mahwah, N. J., Black workers shut down their plant after repeated racial insults against Black workers. They formed an opposition group called the United Black Brothers (UBB). In Detroit, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) was born; thousands of workers at Dodge Main plant walked out to support a list of demands against racism. The very word "revolutionary" attracted workers. Unfortunately, DRUM, and its affiliates at Eldon

Axle and Ford Rouge, did not sustain the great excitement that they created in the UAW. Their attempt to cram Mao's "little red book" down the throats of workers cost them the mass support they had in the beginning.*

Black shop papers began appearing in dozens of plants in 1969. At the Mack Ave. Chrysler plant in Detroit, the Black editor of the **Mack Ave. Stinger** pointed out that white workers read and liked their paper because they raised not only the questions of racism, but also "the question of inhuman conditions of all workers in production: automation, speed-up and the inhumanity of the company and union bureaucrats against workers as a whole."

Although some of the organized Black caucuses have folded since their upsurge in 1969, the revolt in the shops is as deep as ever, and the anger against racism by the companies and the unions is no less intense. A year after the ELRUM strike against racism at Eldon Axle, workers walked out again when a worker was attacked by a foreman, and the company fired the worker for defending himself. Eighty percent of the workers there are Black, and the plant is known as one of the worst in number of job deaths and injuries.

New activity is taking place in steel, too. At U.S. Steel's Clairton, Pa. mill, Black workers organized an Ad Hoc committee to fight racism. A Black steelworker tells the story:

> In the Clairton works many of the Black workers were put in the department where the coke batteries are. This department was nearly all-Black, and the conditions are terrible. They get the coal to a certain temperature and then they have to quench it. All the dust and soot from the coal blows up there. There is so much acid in the air there that the regulators and torches they have turned totally black in six months. If it does that to metal, you can imagine what it does to a person's lungs.
>
> The guys in that department have been trying for six or seven years to get out of there, but they weren't getting anywhere, so they organized a group. In fact, there have been Black caucuses springing up all over the valley. At Clairton, the main problem was getting the union to support them,

*See American Civilization on Trial, News & Letters, 1971.

because if they tried to get transfered one by one, all they got was a lot of harassment . Finally they had some protests at the union and got some publicity, and now the company is changing its policy. Quite a few workers are getting out of that department.

Crisis Is Everywhere

Be it New York or Nashville, be it Atlanta or Newark, be it Pittsburg or Detroit, the sanitation workers are not only striking for better conditions, but also using totally new tactics, which show them to be aware of their problem as both a national one and a Black one. Thus, the Detroit workers called in Ralph Abernathy and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to help them in their struggle.

A Detroit DPW worker tells his own story:

We went out because we knew it wasn't fair for the city to lay men off and then ask the rest for overtime. There were two layoffs: 250 men lost their jobs in May and June. This was in addition to the first layoff. There is no such thing as 'too much work' when there are enough men to do it, and then there is no need for overtime. This is why we held the slowdown and this is why we struck.

The public was with us this time. This is something new that we never had before. The public knew they faced the same thing where they worked.

We're supposed to be getting $4.00 an hour retroactive to when the strike ended, starting August 20. We have a three-year contract this time. When you spread out the money we won over three years, it isn't anything. It's just enough to keep up, but no real gain. Our contracts never used to be three years. They were always one. It's the worst deal I've ever seen.

They've been pushing for overtime ever since we got back to work. There are a few workers who will give the boss overtime. Some men will work from 7:30 in the morning till 9:00 at night when the sun is down. They are crazy.

I've heard that there are city men following the trucks and watching to see who works overtime. **They are going to bring in bigger trucks in October which will hold more and will only need two men instead of three to run them. I'm just**

waiting for more layoffs. They see how much work they can get out of us, and then they turn around and lay off some more men off.

When a quarter of three comes around, whether you finished your assignment or not, you can say no and head for the yard. That's the one thing we've got. The men I work with, the whole crew, we decided **This truck don't work no overtime**. Everybody knows it. The foreman doesn't even bother to ask us any more.

On August, 1971, a group of Black workers at GM's Fleetwood plant got together to put out leaflets. They chose for the name of their group, "Fleetwood Revolutionary Workers Committee". Here is what they said:

"WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR YOU UNTIL AFTER LABOR DAY"

That's what the president of our local union says. That's what the committeemen say; that's what the zone men say. They know because the International told them so.

The men from the International came to the body shop, looked at the jobs for a few minutes and went back to their air-conditioned offices. Then you get the word: "Walk with the foreman, like you're walking on eggshells until after Labor Day." It's not just the body shop, either –it's the whole plant.

We wonder –if Local 15 and the International is willing to let us suffer until Labor Day, what is going to be different **after** Labor Day?

When we came back off the stike, every job had more work put on it. If you had to put in a detonator on the forth floor, now you got four other jobs besides. If you had two guns in the body shop, you got five. Then we supposedly got everything "settled."

But as soon as the jobs were settled, the company broke the settlements and added more work again. How many people who are reading this had your settlement broken, and more work put on? How many have been out on sick leave or missed time because if you didn't you would drop dead? And what about the job they have on the forth floor that is impossible to do, and when they want to get rid of a brother they put him on it?

How many have seen your committeeman given time off

if he fights for you, but if he is no good he can sit up in the committee room all day, or even get a foreman's job? How many of the women have been forced out of the plant, made to take early retirement or disability because of harassment by management and poor representation by the union? How many people have seen **on paper** the local settlement on your job on the production line? All our local agreements are just talk, you never get anything in writing.

Do we have to call on SCLC and Rev. Abernathy to come down here to Fleetwood to help us the way the sanitation workers did?

DO WE HAVE TO GO ON WILDCAT THE WAY THE SANITATION WORKERS DID?

WE ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE WE CAN COUNT ON TO LOOK OUT FOR US. That is why we have to stick together. If we don't, we are going to be in chains for the rest of our days. Even our children will be in chains.

—Fleetwood Revolutionary Workers Committee

No one can predict where the Black worker's movement will go from here. But in every plant and mill, workers are questioning everything, searching for new ways to drive racism and anti-human conditions out of the shops. As one worker said: "We've got no place to go, so we might as well fight right here."

James Wells, Shipyard

Black Women

Black women have given an added dimension to the determination to "fight right here."

A young Black intellectual in New York says:

> I'm not thoroughly convinced that Black Liberation, the way it's been spelled out, will really and truly mean my liberation. I'm not so sure that when it comes time 'to put down the gun', that I won't have a broom shoved in my hands, as so many of my Cuban sisters have. I, and I alone want to be the one to decide my life style now and tomorrow; that's why I see Women's Liberation struggle, as a necessary and crucial co-existent struggle. I want to be sure that when the great day of liberation comes, I won't then have to start my own struggle for autonomy.
>
> By fighting for my liberation as a woman, I'm not draining away anything from the Black Liberation struggle, because any gains made by me in my behalf, and on behalf of half the Black population (women), is automatically a gain for the entire race.

An older woman worker in Detroit puts a different emphasis on the question:

> It appears to me that we put too much concern on the Black woman's liberation as if the Black man has been liberated the same as the white man. He hasn't even been liberated equally with the white woman. I think this is what we have to work out first. Take the Woman Suffrage movement. It was mainly a white woman's movement, struggling for the right to vote, although it had got its inspiration from the Black women and men in the Abolitionist movement. After they won the right to vote, those white women seemed to have forgotten the Black struggle for liberation.
>
> That doesn't mean the Black women shouldn't fight against their men. I don't think Black men should boss women any more than white men should. The reason Black men want to be boss over

their women is because that's what white men do.

It was the slave master who instituted the pattern of housework for women, and mainly for Black women. Even though she worked in the fields with men all day, it was the woman who came home to do all the cooking, washing, and keeping house. The slave masters had shown this was the woman's job, so it became a part of all men's thinking, and it was accepted by most Black women in those days....

Back in the old days when the white man kept the Black man under his control, Black men were kept working so hard and paid so little that they couldn't treat their wives like the white wives were treated. And the white man was glad to make his wife think he was treating her so much better than the Black man treated his wife.

I felt the white women were more oppressed along social lines in the South than anywhere in the world, and they still are to some extent.

To a domestic worker at Berkeley, the most important thing is the conditions of work:

We are in a struggle to get equal pay for equal work. We do the same work as a custodian or a janitor and we are asking to be reclassified as matrons and the janitors as custodians. The University don't want to do this; they are trying to pretend that we don't do the same work. The whole system reeks with racism. All the managers are white. The white workers who are hired are put in a position where they can make it all year around. They aren't given the part time work. We had a couple of white maids. But they have always managed to put them in a position where they oversee the Black worker. There seems to be no end to the cutting of the number of Black workers and load the work onto those who stay.

I think the Women's Liberation movement could play a heavy role because the establishment wants to exploit the woman worker and this is the way they have of doing it. We have a double dose of it because we are Black workers and we are Black women. They exploit us both ways.

Black Women A Special Problem

Almost 58% of all domestic workers are Black, and domestic work is not covered by minimum wage laws in the majority of states. Other jobs in the

so-called service industry, are exempt from labor law legislation. Thus, the massive campaign for unionization by hospital workers in both New York and Charleston, had to deal not only with "winning" union recognition from the employer, but also with fighting the state government to be allowed to have a union at all.

The unemployment rate for Black women runs to 30% and 40% for certain age groups. Young women, between the ages of 16 and 24, have it the worst. In Detroit, the unemployment rate for them runs over 50%! Many women who are able to find jobs are forced to work part-time – because that is all that's available for them.

Here is the average income for Black women as a group, compared to other groups in the labor force:

White Men	$7,080
Black Men	3,829
White Women	3,380
Black Women	1,688

Many of the jobs which Black women can get pay so little that being on welfare makes better economic sense. The following is the story of a welfare mother in Detroit who took a job as a hospital aide.

> I got off ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) when I got the chance to get a job in a hospital here as an aide. My first day at work was supposed to be spent observing and getting acquainted with the hospital. But when the week was out, I was still confused about what my routines were supposed to be, because there was so much I was expected to do. I could never seem to catch up.
>
> When the hospital is short of help because of absenteeism, which is most of the time, those who come in are supposed to make up the work of those who haven't. The work is very hard.
>
> Right after I hired in, I asked an aide who had been there longer if there was a union in the hospital. She said there was supposed to have been a union coming in since March and that when she had hired in at $1.60 an hour, they had promised her a raise in two months. But it never came. We aides still get $1.60 an hour.
>
> I left ADC to take this job and my check isn't much more than when I was on ADC. I used to get $112 every two weeks; at the hospital I get $115 every two weeks after deductions. With three children and myself to take care of, that doesn't go very far.

ADC mothers have special problems everywhere they turn:

> In the Detroit area there has been a big scandal about the way the FHA inspectors approved homes at prices that are five times or more what they are worth. The real estate companies have been buying old houses for $2,000 and reselling them to ADC mothers for $10,000 or more, in slummy areas. After the family moves in they find out the wires are bad, the furnace is bad, the roof leaks, the basement floods. Most of these women just don't know what to look for ... The real estate people know they are easy victims. And now that the scandal has been exposed, they will probably just stop the ADC mothers from being able to buy homes. This is something Women's Liberation should work on.

Hungry In Every Area

> Black women have had to be more agressive than white women because we've often had to be the head of our families. But the welfare system has really put Black families in a bind. Many of the poor Black men, even though they work, cannot support their families because they make so little. Their wives usually have to go to domestic jobs to get work. Even though the Black woman is also poorly paid, she often brings home more than the man, and she will be considered the head of the family because that's what she's been forced to be. The welfare system has made it even worse. The man has to move right out of the home so the women can get more money for the children. All this has put Black women where they are. It is not good when all the responsibility of rearing a family is on the mother.
>
> Black people need to set up a different kind of structure for family life than what we've seen the white people have. Because their children are telling us that the white structure has failed them. We need to have man and woman as equals, not one dominating the other. And we don't need domination over the children, either. Nobody can develop that way.
>
> Racism is still the worst problem the Black man **or** woman has. The Black woman **can't** forget the Black man, because he hasn't been liberated either.
>
> Our people are hungry in every area.

Listen to a Black woman tell of the time she was in the Black Panther Party:

In this particular Black Panther chapter in which I was a member, we sisters had a great amount of love and respect for each other. This cohesiveness was detectable during drill practice. When a sister misses or takes too many steps, or when some sister is out of order, the squad leader orders her to drop, and commense to do push-ups or sit-ups. Other sisters would respond and drop too.

Love and respect was expressed in other ways. i.e., before drill practice sisters would be sitting on the steps and our sister who was considered head of the women would sometimes greet us by kissing all of us on the forehead. You may ask if the captain or squad leaders ever showed this type of affection. The answer would be no, not in broad daylight, and in the open air where their chauvinist nature could oe exposed.

Drill practice was a challenge for both brothers and sisters, but more so for the sisters. Drill practice required a tremendous amount of discipline. This society hasn't guided her in this direction as well as it has men. It's more of a natural conditioning for men because some of them have served in the military, and as Black men they have toiled with the everyday problems of survival. Discipline, I feel is a necessity in the Black Panther Party. Many of my sisters have had to toil twice or sometimes three times as hard as the brothers to achieve this Utopia.

One afternoon during drill practice, the captain confronted the sisters and told them his was informed by the brothers that many of the sisters within the chapter were only there to find themselves men and weren't dedicated to the cause. He went on to say that many of the sisters were 'paper tigers' (Mao's definition of a counter-revolutionary), and to go look somewhere else for husbands. This was painful. Along with many of the other hang-ups within the chapter from a sister to brother perspective, for the captain and brothers now to caricature our devotion to the party and Black people in general, was disheartening as well as chauvinist.

Later on that evening several of the sisters got to rapping and expressing their feelings about what they were accused of. The sisters knew that these accusations were prejudiced and that they did no such thing to discredit their obligation to the party. Several of the sisters took it very personally and resigned from the party, saying that they were unable to keep-up with the male to female confrontations existing in that chapter. After that incident one by one, sisters were

resigning from the party.

Henceforth, I can conceive of a Black Women's Liberation, but keeping in mind that the criteria needed for intiating this would be different and separate from the white feminist groups. This would be more of an awareness, a dialectic cohesiveness. It should not consist of just a vanguard group of women telling other women how they should feel, but a conglomeration of Black women expressing themselves and their problems. And by doing this, it should bring about the love and respect we have lost or never had for each other as sisters. You can see how easy it is for the brothers to enhance some type of rapport among themselves i.e., handshaking and the everyday rhetoric that they use.

We sisters need to stop looking and reacting to each other in a defensive or offensive manner and bring about some type of rapport among ourselves by necessitating our love and respect for each other. This is one way and the most important way in which a Black Women's Liberation organization can achieve its fullness of purpose.

Write on, Right on, and Fight on for Sister Love!

Not Black or White – All Human

A high school woman in Los Angeles puts it this way:

I disagree that Black women should be ever yielding and obedient to their men because this makes life 'simpler'. And I don't think it is the 'nature of women' to be submissive...

George Jackson wrote that the concept of the emancipated woman is a white concept, but I think the idea of delegating women to child-rearing positions is more closely emulating white society. In this society people are delegated to positions regardless of their personal aspirations: Blacks are delegated to manual labor jobs, women are delegated to child-rearing and housekeeping, and these positions disregard the abilities of people as human beings.

It is dangerous to state what the function of a human being is going to be without considering what that human wants to be.

I think a society, in order to be free, has to be based upon the ideal that every human being is going to be encouraged and allowed to develop his or her potential to the fullest.

A woman in San Francisco speaks to white women in the WL movement:

People have asked me, as a young Black revolutionary woman, why Black women and third world women are not responding to

the middle class Women's Liberation movement, or why they aren't in this movement. I would like to tell them that Women's Liberation was invented by Black women and third world women – only it hasn't been called Women's Liberation. It's just been called our daily struggle.

Where we are in the revolutionary movement is very out front, and clearly defined. We're in the movement, always have been, always will be. And the next time you ask yourselves why you are not reaching Black women and third world women, ask yourselves also why you're not reaching the everyday working white woman in that sweatbelt factory. Wow, will you be in for an eye-opener.

Black women have varied opinions on the issue raised by the W L movement. Perhaps most controversial are the questions of abortion and birth control. Some Black organizations have labelled these as genocide, as have some women, but most women of both races are demanding the right to decide for themselves if and when to have children. One Black woman writes:

We believe that it is the inalienable human right of every woman to control her own reproductive process. If she does not have this right, then her other rights of being a human being, a self-determining person, have been violated. Just as Black people have been invisible people in the U.S., women have been invisible people all over the world for centuries.

The following excerpt from the Statement on Birth Control by the Black Women's Liberation Group in Mount Vernon, N. Y. is addressed to their "brothers":

Now a lot of Black brothers are into the new bag. Black women are being asked by militant Black brothers not to practice birth control because it is a form of Whitey's committing genocide on Black people. Well, true enough, but it takes two to practice genocide, and Black women are able to decide for themselves. . . For us, birth control is the freedom to **fight genocide** of Black women and children . . . Having too many babies stops us from supporting our children, teaching them the truth, or stopping the brainwashing as you say, and from fighting Black men who still want to use and exploit us. But we don't think you're going to understand us because you are a bunch of little middle-class people and we are poor Black women. The middle-class never understands the poor because they always need to use them as you want to use poor Black women's children to gain power for yourself. You'll run the Black community

with your kind of Black power – You on top! The poor understand class struggle!

International Black Women

There is no problem on the world scene – whether it relates to former African slavery, current literature, unemployment, conditions of labor, the family, the community – that doesn't enter into this continuing dialogue among Black women, and that doesn't concern itself with what is the future. When the first woman we quoted raised the question of brooms and guns, she was rightly critical of the Communist societies who talk a lot about freedom, but don't practice it, especially to women. The women have wound up asking whether we won't need a second revolution to achieve real liberation.

As one young woman put it:

> Most of the current literature on the Black revolution has been centered around the Black male. He wants to share power with white males. So what about the fate of Black and white women? Are we to retain a secondary status? Take **Ebony** magazine. They had a special issue on the Black woman. A number of the articles presented the contributions of Black women as heroines in Civil Rights, in the arts, and professions. However the **Ebony** editorial must have felt they had to remind its readers that'the past is behind us, the immediate goal of the Negro woman today should be the establishment of a strong family unit in which the father is dominant'. Nonetheless, other Black militant writers have not felt at all inspired to even mention the contributions of **their** women. They always refer to Black Power in the terms of Black males.
>
> We have lived under an international caste system at the top of which is the ruling class, and at the bottom of which is the non-white female. A good example of this caste status of women would be what happened at the end of African slavery in the U.S. When the slaves were given their freedom after the Civil War, the female slaves were included, but when the right to vote was in question, the Black females had to take a place beside the white females who were not allowed to vote.
>
> The real liberation of women is to see them become active, to see them express their determination in society, to see them attain their full dignity and to see them take responsibilities and obtain decision making positions. More and more women are awaking everyday to find that collective strength and action will allow us to be free to build a totally new, truly human society.

South and North

The racism that prevades the shops pervades every aspect of American society. The question of busing has exposed how deep the cancer penetrates North as well as South. Indeed, the North by now appears worse than the South, because to its racism it has added a total hypocrisy. Though the South has made all too little progress, the North has actually retrogressed.

A Detroit worker from Alabama says this:

> I read an article in **Ebony** in which the writer was reporting a survey he made of the South. He felt nothing had changed. All the things that the Blacks have gone through for the past 10 or 12 years haven't fundamentally changed anything. Well, we know that there hasn't been a total change. It hasn't been a real revolution. But I think if we don't recognize the changes that have been made through the struggle of the Blacks and the whites who supported them five or six years ago, we're missing something. To really get an idea of the changes that have been made, you have to understand how oppressed the people there were.
>
> In Alabama, Lowndes County is one of the last places where Black people were able to go to the polls to vote. Now they are beginning to feel their strength in terms of voting and running the county. In the elections last November, Blacks ran four candidates and three of them got elected. This was the first time in history that any Black person was ever elected to any county position.

John Hulett, the newly elected Black sheriff of Lowndes County, spoke of that election and the future:

> We organized a political action committee to go into the community and seek people who could possibly win. I was asked by the committee to run for sheriff. Blacks also ran for coroner, Circuit Court clerk, and member of the state House of Representatives. We won the first three positions. Our candidates for the House carried Lowndes County by a large margin but lost because of the vote in the neighboring county.

We were able to bring people together in our own area who were willing to go out and do the leg work that was needed in our county. Before the elections we had a hundred people working full-time in the community, especially at night, holding meetings, giving educational classes, conducting voting education projects to try to muscle up enough strength to win the election. We were able to arouse some of our students who encouraged our adults to go to the polls on election day. We organized car pools to carry people, babysitters, and people who stayed at home to make telephone calls.

Now that we have won the election, the people who supported us are looking for changes, especially in law enforcement. I feel that we will have to produce, in order for the Black people and the white people to continue to support the Black leadership.

There are going to be some changes as far as having a Black coroner is concerned. I can remember a few incidents where we knew people had died accidental deaths, but the coroner refused to sign the papers that they were accidental. We think he was tied in with the insurance companies.

As for the clerk of the Circuit Court, Black people don't have too much contact with the court, but I feel just the idea of having Black people in the courthouse is going to make a change. Blacks will feel freer about coming to use it. And the white courthouse personnel will realize they have to change their treatment of Blacks or risk not being reelected.

Conscious Black Force

It isn't the "vote" that has become so important. It is that the vote made Blacks conscious of their strength as a Black force which they are only just beginning to exercise.

From a student in Nashville, Tennessee, comes this report:

The Black students at Fisk and elsewhere in Nashville have formed an off campus school called the 'People's College' which serves the purpose of politically educating Black college students and providing a place to analyze and participate in the movements in the community.

Originally designed only for college students, plans are now to include political education classes for high school students and local workers. Eventually we hope to form a United Black Student Front encompassing all Black college students from local colleges, Black and

white students from the local high schools.

As for the community itself, Black people in Nashville are presently boycotting white business as a lever to alleviate some injustices suffered by Blacks in this city. The Black Community Conference (a coalition of organizations) is spearheading this struggle and has held Saturday marches for four or five weeks. Students have participated vigorously in these marches and have gained some valuable practice.

The emphasis of progressive Black students is to become involved in the community and its struggle and not to become divorced intellectually and spiritually. The present boycott gives us a chance to do just that.

Meetings have been held this year to organize local Black workers in area plants as part of the nation-wide revolutionary Black workers' movement. This is new in Nashville because previously Black workers haven't been organized.

Students here feel, however, that Black workers should organize independently at first because of the peculiar position Blacks as a community occupy in this society.

As for the movement itself, I can't claim to speak for everybody at Fisk, but there seems to be a need nation-wide for a uniting of revolutionary theory and practice to move the Black masses as during the early '60's.

The Panther split is a case of the lack of this merger and an elitism that moved away from the masses and engaged in a dangerous worship of charismatic leadership reminscent of the 'cult of personality' of Stalin. The belief in a Messianic-type leader in the Black community is a hang up from the movement of the '60's that the Black masses cannot afford. I for one hope that progressive Black workers' movements do not engage in elitism or vanguardism. Progressive students here will support the workers movement whole-heartedly and will participate in their struggles.

The Black youth columnist for News & Letters wrote from his campus at East Lansing to a Black student at another university:

> Last spring, during the anti-war protests, we should have had a display of unity, but it feli apart, because the white students went to one or two people in the Black organization and asked them what they thought thought the masses wanted to say about Cambodia etc. The white students never bothered to ask the mass of Blacks what they wanted to say, all because these brothers let themselves be used as 'token Negroes'.

From last year up to now, it's been all downhill. The Black United Front (BUF) together with the Front to Combat Fascism (which is Maoist), sponsored Huey Newton and the Panthers last fall. Not only was the organization of the talk washed up (the security was tight enough to keep you from going to the bathroom, and it was not revealed until the day itself on stage– that most whites paid more than Blacks for the tickets), but both Blacks and whites walked out on Huey, partly in protest of the above and because of disagreement with Huey's piece. The BUF hasn't gotten mass support since that day in November, although they still exist as the 'vanguard of the people' on this campus, along side of several other groups of Blacks, all playing polemics with each other instead of the Man.

I don't know whether you happen to have read the history of that total liberation philosophy Marx originated in his day when he participated in workers' revolutions as well as helping the Abolitionists and Black labor in the Civil War in our country. But Marx worked out his philosophy not only against capitalism and racism, but in distinction from all other so-called communist and socialist ideas. The first thing Marx did was to make a distinction between vulgar communism and genuine liberation which meant being whole men and women. This is why he called his philosophy originally 'a new Humanism.' How right he was! For we now see that the vulgar communism has become the state-capitalism of our age in Russia as well as in America and China where the ruling bureaucracies sit around and figure out countless ways to talk out of both sides of their mouths while extracting more surplus labor from the workers, giving out a measly 12 cents to equate the 'cost of living', and continually wave the spectre of unemployment, concentration camps and bombs and death in your face.

This is one of the many reasons why **News & Letters** is unique. The fact that we advocate Black and white solidarity in labor and in having seen Black masses as touchstone of American civilization does not behoove us to chant songs as the Panthers, Maoists, Communists, Trotskyists and other factions. Why not, instead of quoting from 'the little red book', not read Marx himself and on that foundation work out for our age, on native soil as well as with world ties, and by listening to the voices from below, the unity of theory and practice, philosophy and revolution, so that thinking and doing will never again be separted and we will all live truly human lives?

Elliott Douglass

The Indian Movement

Pueblo Viejo, Arizona. Ancient Pueblo Group

We have heard all our lives about the Battle of Little Bighorn, and the massacre at Wounded Knee, but today, in America, 1971, it is the invasion of Alcatraz and the Battle of 4-Corners (to mention just two) that concern us all. The government says they don't exist; the vigilantes say they are just the end of the Indian Wars; the Indians say they are a new stage in their struggle for freedom and dignity.

There is no single Indian movement. Of the many different developing movements, one from Michigan, representative of both urban and reservation Indians; one from Pit River, California; and one from Alcatraz, tell the story.

Pit River

In their statement released to the public last year the Pit River Indians say:

> On October 26, 1970, the Pit River Tribe of Northern California met with U. S. Marshalls and the U. S. Forest Service (Mr. Berlin), to create a type of land situation that the Indians and the government could accept. However, the only accomplishment was a solid stand by Berlin to remove our tribel headquarters--a quonset hut...Berlin said that he would look silly arresting all of the Indians. They went away that night having solved nothing. The Indians elected to remain firm and defend the quonset hut, for it was our home and the beginning of our school. We were on our land. There was no reason to leave because someone or some **Gestapo** group simply asks us to, then threatens our lives if we don't. It is not the Indian way.
>
> Morning. 27 October 1970. Federal marshalls, Forest Service and deputies massed at 4-Corners, which is within the boundaries

of the 3,386,000 acres we are claiming. The officers were armed with guns, clubs, and dogs; we were armed with tree limbs and 2-by-4's. We were also armed with the **Truth.**

They moved in on us near the tree we were cutting. About 15 people were arrested in the first wave; the second took another 15. When we were chained and in the police cars, the Forest Service personnel moved in and destroyed our home. We were charged with: assaulting federal officers and obstructing officers from doing their duty. Actually we were protecting our lives and our land and our people. The trial date is set. We expect the worst, for their is not justice in this land for Indians. We are not licking our wounds America. We just want it to be known that we are a small Indian nation of 531. **We are doing a job that seemed impossible only moments ago–fighting the big-business government syndrome that has destroyed nearly all hope of Human Rights in this land. Our fight is for land and the right to be human beings and respect and decency. We are fighting for you too.**

For more than 40 years the Pit River Indians have been in court. There has never been a decent judgment in favor of them... In 1956 the ICC (Indian Claims Commission) aired the finding to Congress and the general public that the lands claimed by the Pit River Indians in their petition to the ICC in 1946, was, in fact, Pit River Indian Ancestral Land. There was no treaty . . . Pit River Indians still have 'Indian Title' to the Ancestral Lands...The Congress of the U. S. accepted this information with a nod of the head, and a shrug of the shoulders...At Alturas, California, 1964, a platoon of Attorneys representing the Indians attempted to convince the Pit River Indians that they should accept the government's offer of 47¢ per acre...The white man sells the same land for $2,000.00 per acre...The Pit River Indians did not accept the offer...There was no place to go. No legal direction. Taking the land by occupation was the only way.

Here is how one Pit River Indian described his involvement:

I got involved in Pit River because I am a Pit River Indian, and my mother and father are buried there as are three of my brothers, and my grandfather and my great-grandfather and my great-great-grandfather's great-great-grandfather. Doing things for the people really should be the most rewarding thing anyone can do. The Constitution was born with that idea. People who were

forced out of a country by a government which was so evil that they couldn't put up with it, people who were so defeated spiritually, psychologically, physically who said:'There's a boat out there and I'll get on it and go across that ocean. I don't even know if it's going to fall off the other side or not, but it's better than here.'

Those same people, when they got here, the first thing they said was, 'What a beautiful place. How can we destroy this, how can we institute the same government we are fleeing from?' And that's exactly what they did. We are now being ruled by exactly the same kind of government that forced the people out of Europe. The same thing here, different names, America. The only thing different between Hitler and America is the name. We prove it everyday to everybody. The Indians are constantly proving it to people, but nobody listens.

A large audience of sympathizers does us no good, any more than the people who are the Silent Majority who leave Nixon in office. Nixon is doing nothing for the country. We need more than sympathy, we need people who sympathize with themselves; people who know that the government is oppressing them, people who know that corporations have more human rights than human beings, and wish to change it; people who would like to have a better life for their children and their children's children. These are the kind of people we need. Sympathy comes in as many colors as the sunrise, in that many complexions. We have to have more than sympathy, we have to have sympathy with direction, direct direction. We're getting very little of that.

Something that you have to understand is that Pit River is a tribe. We didn't 'get together',we were put together over a million years ago, and have never been taken apart. White culture? I was there. I have a different goal now. I want to wear buckskin and eat off the land and sleep out under the trees and under the stars with nobody hassling me. That's the biggest thing, the government comes and hassles you, the Bureau of Indian Affairs comes and hassles you, some anthropologist creeps up on you when you're trying to sleep. When I get back to the land and back to the spirit, when I can communicate, when I can find out who I am and speak my language, when I can talk to the stars and the trees and they talk back, when I can get to that point, then I won't have to have anything else. Nothing else will even count. Not even life itself. Look at the kind of life we have now, having to drag the body around: drag it to court and Pacific Gas and Electric Company, drag it out to have a sandwich, drag it back into court at the request of PG and E, when the courts are all stacked against us anyhow.

GREAT LAKES AREA INDIANS

Gary M. Wilson
Lac du Flambeau Chippewa

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Indians from the Great Lakes region staged a protest at Fort Michilimackinac in northern Michigan. The two main targets of the demonstrations were the annual Boy Scout pageant which shows the Indian as a stereotypical bloodthirsty savage and the sacreligious, dehumanistic display of the bodies of our grandfathers.

In the Boy Scout pageant, the capture of Ft. Michilimackinac by the Indians from the white exploiters is portrayed. In the re-enactment, however, the Indians are shown to be maniacal savages, who killed women and children, as well as the men.

The main issue was the illegal and indecent display of our ancestors' bones. At a place known as the 'Old Indian Burial' in St. Ignace, Mich., there is a sign proclaiming, 'Exposed to view--52 skeletons in a single grave!' . The sacred burial grounds had been transformed into a capitalistic venture, with the 'owner' of the property, Earl Richardson, getting 50¢ a head for tourists to view and snapshot the bones.

After seeing the graves, one white sympathizer said it reminded him of Auschwitz. Richardson was told in no uncertain terms that he must close down his tourist trap and return the bones to Mother Earth. He indicated that he would cooperate; time will tell.

The struggle of Indians for their dignity was summed up by a young Menominee woman who said: 'In 30 or 40 years they will have the Calley State Park in S.E. Asia where you can see the bodies of the natives in their ceremonial burial ditches.'

The pamphlet distributed at the demonstrations was entitled 'develop the Indian Priorities of our State and Local Government'. It pointed out several very shocking facts:

The yearly countable income spent by the Mackinac Parks Commission Office, in the Office of the Dept. of Natural Resources was $400,000.00 in 1970, far more than the total of all Michigan Indian Programs. During the same period of time, the Michigan Commission of Indian Affairs had a token budget of $22,000.00. Fourteen thousand dollars of this went for salaries, meals, refreshments and mileage. The pushout rate of Indian children in the public and private schools is about 80%. Federal and

State monies designated for our children have been spent for other purposes, mainly to benefit those school officials and bureaucrats responsible for the pushout environment. Recently a third-grade child was expelled by a teacher at the Monroe Center School near Traverse City. This scene is repeated daily in Michigan schools. You cannot find Native American professionals anywhere in the top decision-making levels of state government. Even key departments that are supposed to deal with the Indian problems daily, like the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, the Michigan Department of Social Services, the Michigan State Department of Education, the Michigan Department of Health--where other minorities, who call us 'brother,' now in these positions are giving us the same inaction, the same promises, and the same lies we have been hearing for years. Each Christian holiday, big publicity is given to individuals and organizations who are donating clothing and toys to the poor Indian--many items wrapped in gift paper are dirty, broken, or worn out. We feel that we are being used for the dumping-ground of unwanted things. We as traditional Indians do not give unwanted items as gifts. Not one treaty made with out grandfathers has been kept as it was written by the U. S. Government. Some officials in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources have even tried, once again, to take away our court-earned treaty rights to hunt and fish. The following statistics are the state of affairs of our people in the nation. An honest complete survey in Michigan would reflect the same thing for many of us living here. Life expectancy is 44 years, as opposed to 71 for non-Indians. The average income is $1,500. The average school level completed is 5½ years. Our teen-age suicide rate is three times the national average, ten times the national average on some reservations. Unemployment exceeds 60%.

One very important aspect of this demonstration at Mackinac was that it brought together two seperate forces in the Indian movement, one force being the reservation Indian, the people who have been on reservations all their lives, and who have been Indians all their lives, who have been forced into the corner by white society. The other force is the urban Indian. This is the Indian who has been living in the city all his life, whose parents probably lived in the city, too; the Indian who has been assimilated almost to the point of non-existence. The urban and the reservation Indians came together at Mackinac, and it was the conjunction of these two different directions that made the power that there was at this demonstration.

Alcatraz

The occupation of Alcatraz was described by the participants in their newsletter:

> Indians of all tribes greet our brothers and sisters of all races and tongues upon our earth mother. We here on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay, California, represent many tribes of the United States as well as Canada, Alaska, and Central and South America.
>
> We are still holding the island of Alcatraz in the true names of freedom, justice and equality, because you, our brothers and sisters of this earth, have lent support to our just cause. We reach out our hands and hearts and send spirit messages to each and every one of you – We hold the rock!
>
> Our anger at the many injustices forced upon us since the first white man landed on these sacred shores has been transformed into a hope that we will be allowed the long-suppressed right of all men to plan and to live their own lives in harmony and cooperation with all fellow creatures and with nature.
>
> Be it known, however, that we are quite serious in our demand to be given ownership of this island in the name of Indians of all tribes. We are here to stay, men, women and children. We feel that this request is but little to ask from a government which has systematically stolen our lands, destroyed a once- beautiful and natural landscape, killed off the creatures of nature, polluted air and water, ripped open the very bowels of our earth in senseless greed; and instituted a program to annihilate the many Indian tribes of this land by outright murder which even now continues by the methods of theft, suppression, prejudice, termination, and so called re-location and assimilation.
>
> We are a proud people! We are Indians! We have observed and rejected much of what so-called civilization offers. We are Indians! We will preserve our traditions and ways of life by educating our own children. We are Indians! We will join hands in a unity never before put into practice. We are Indians! Our earth mother awaits our voices.

Hopi

The Chicano Struggle

LA RAZA – CHICANOS IN MOTION

August 29, 1970

"Twenty-five thousand people. That's the most beautiful thing that can happen. I was with my people who were wide awake, young and old." A young Chicano is speaking. The Chicano Moratorium of August, '70, held in the barrios of East Los Angeles, is the subject.*

We were suppose to have just half the road. But part of the way we took the whole road. The sheriff had to let us, because we were too many. Along the march people talked about their anger and frustration. Stuff that we had always had within us. Now we were getting it out.

The cops were very evident in riot gear. The night sticks ready.

It didn't take long. People arriving at the park for the rally after the march didn't get to sit down to listen to speakers. At the corner of the park there was a liquor store. A minor disturbance occured with some trying to prevent the police from arresting anyone. Instead of police calling in modest reenforcements which would have ended it, they called for riot control. Cops from all over the county poured in. The cops decided to clear the park.

They moved in, declared an illegal assembly and said everyone must move or be arrested. There was no real chance for many to escape as there were buildings surrounding the park and police at all the exits. The police made no effort to discriminate between

*In the Southwest it is the Chicano movement. In Spanish Harlem one finds liberation groups such as the Young Lords. In Puerto Rico itself there is a movement for self-determination. No matter what its specific name, the point is that there are many movements of Brown people. It is indeed continent-wide and has a relationship to the totality of third world struggles. We are here looking at and listening to the Chicano part of that movement.

men, women, and little children when it came to spraying mace.

It was a real battle for several minutes. Many kids were willing to fight the police. But the police kept coming with troops and troops.

I came across a woman with two daughters of 13 or 14. All had had mace sprayed on them. I helped them wash their faces.

My own daughter is three and I began thinking, is she going to have the same thing happen to her in 10 years? For the first time I think I wanted to kill. I actually had enough hatred in me to break someone's neck.

Another Chicano speaks of the 29th

Police were loaded into buses. It was a kind of 'we are going off to war' atmosphere. You could sense it all around. Some say there was an overreaction. There was no overreaction. The sheriff's men had anticipated the march. They knew what it was going to be and whatever reaction that took place was premeditated. They had all of the equipment, and the men. It was a case of a war plan well executed.

Some have been disturbed that the shopping areas on Whittier Blvd. were broken into after the police moved into the park. But the Chicano people are aware a lot more than outside people, who never get exposed to what goes on on the Eastside. The people know that a very high percentage of those stores were owned by non-residents; that an item by item evaluation of food prices, or clothing store prices would show that it cost more to be poor. They know about the high interest rates charged.

At the inquest over the death of Salazar (Rubin Salazar, Mexican-American journalist killed during the Chicano Moratorium by a tear gas cannon shell fired by sheriff's deputies into a bar), everything the sheriff's men said went unchallenged. Everything our people said was questioned. And still it was clear what the sheriff's men were doing to our community.

Strands of the Movement

The police may have broken up the Chicano Moratorium in a planned manner, and in fact made it infamous with the murder of Rubin Salazar, but August 29th was at the same time a landmark in the Chicano movement for self - determination.

Thirty thousand took to the streets of East Los Angeles from as far away as Texas, Colorado and New Mexico. They came from all over the Southwest. The Moratorium can be looked upon as a coming together of many strands of the Chicano movement. Where that movement is and where it has the potential to go, can best be seen by looking at some of these strands. Three strands which we can look at are Tijerina's movement in New Mexico, the farmworkers in California and the activities in the neighborhoods of East L.A.

In New Mexico, where a high percentage of people live in rural areas, the land grant movement has been a catalyst for social change. The land grants, whose titles may go back hundreds of years, are by themselves not the key. Their reestablishment would benefit only a few. The thrust of the movement is far from being a restoration of land grants to a few. It is concerned with **ejiero** – common grazing land. The villagers of northwest New Mexico are in tne movement because they see the land as the key to the existence of the whole village. The common grazing land would be for all the cattle owned by inhabitants of the village. Their fight puts them directly against the federal government because most of the disputed land is not private land, but is national forest land which the government has prohibited the villagers from using. Common grazing land means a different social existence for the villagers.

In California the farmworkers have a different thrust to the movement. It is not a land question as in New Mexico. The farmworkers of California own little land. But what these primarily Chicano workers do have is their labor power which the farm owners have for years bought cheaply and used abusively. Today the farmworkers are daring to say:"No, we won't sell our labor power to you at your price and with complete freedom to use as you wish."

Agriculture, a multi-billion dollar business, is California's biggest business. The farmworkers started their strike in Delano with $85 in the treasury. Eighty-five dollars versus millions. How could they possibly win such a fight? And yet they have won some victories in the grape fields. This is where the human element becomes such a magnificent force. They won first because the grapes are worth nothing without the human labor power to harvest them. The owners must have that power or they are doomed. But second, when that human power says, "No, we want a decent living," it has become more than mere labor power for the owners' use, it has become a new dimension for the farmworkers themselves. The farmworkers' fight is a labor dispute, but it is much more than that.

To those who say that labor is dead as a force for social change, it is proof that it is necessary to go lower and deeper within that labor force to find the elements for social change. The labor movement had tried at an earlier time to organize farmworkers in California and across the country. **Factories in the Fields** was and still is a very real concept. But whereas much of organized labor had previously felt that unionizing farmworkers was a question pf pouring enough money into the job, Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers have shown that the secret is not money so much as people; as tapping that magnificent human force which says no to the farm owner and thereby discovers its own talents to exist, to carry out strikes, to organize itself. The farmworkers' campaign is a civil rights fight as well as a labor dispute. It is a Chicano struggle as well as a workers' struggle. Thus from the cities, from Chicano students on campus, Brown Berets from the barrios, as well as thousands of Mexican-Americans throughout the Southwest came concrete support in picketing stores that sold non-union grapes, in taking food to the strikers in Delano. **Huelga!** has ment both a revitalization of the labor movement, and a strand of the Chicano movement.

The Chicano movement is in the cities, and especially East Los Angeles.

What form does the movement take here? High school blow-outs, Brown Berets, La Raza magazine, Chicano Moratorium Committee, the Movimiento, Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (The Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan, MEChA) are some of the ways. La Raza Unite is organizing a political party. La Raza Unite Labor Committee helps Chicano workers in strikes and boycotts. It reaches into many parts of the community, but especially among the young.

Some ask if the high school blow-outs were just kids messing around or if they had a relationship to the Chicano movement. Young Chicanos at Roosevelt High talk about their activities:

> Friday morning we all came to school. Before third period we rallied near the school auditorium to raise our demands, which included getting the cops of campus, open campus, better food, and a voice for the students in what goes on at school. The assistant principal refused to talk to us, saying he 'refused to deal with a mob'. There were 300 of us. Other students in the building joined us. The cops declared our assembly illegal and threatened to attack. About nine girls linked arms to stop the cops from breaking them up, but the cops pulled them apart. Roosevelt's 'coconut administrators' (brown on the outside, white on the inside), had 37 of us busted. The cops were as brutal as

usual, pulling girls' hair and twisting their arms.

What happened at Roosevelt is very understandable if you know anything about the quality of education there. It isn't education, it's indoctrination. Of the 3,200 students, at least 80% are Chicano. The school produces graduates who can hardly read or write. The system of tracking forces 75% of the students into an industrial arts major.

There is a certain posing of the question of where the movement is in terms of Chicanos versus Anglos. That is an important question. But also important is the debate between different parts of the Chicano community. A young Chicana poses one form of it:

> I am not sure the Chicano movement as a whole wants to go as far as I do, because the Chicano movement has older people in it and a lot of them don't want to be as free.

The Brown Berets are another facet of the movement in East Los Angeles. One middle aged Chicana spoke highly of the Berets, relating an incident in which the Berets caught a Chicano youngster who stole a woman's purse. Instead of turning him over to the police, they made him do work in the community. But others are disturbed at the military manner of the Berets.

The concept of Atzlan is supposed to be what links Tijerina's movement, the farmworkers, East Los Angeles, Crystal City, Texas, and Chicano activists in Denver. But Atzlan has many interpretations. Does it mean land as such? An attempt to stop police from harrasing people in East Los Angeles through organizations like the Barrio Defense Committee? The formation of a farmworkers' union? Or is it the whole—self-determination?

Finally, in terms of social change for America as a whole, there must be links with these outside of the Chicano movement, especially with the Black movement, which in the 60's has no doubt been an inspiration to the Chicano movement. Tijerina, when speaking to villagers in New Mexico, shows this consciousness of the Black movement:

> Look at the Black Man. He has become free, free in spirit. He has lost his fear of 'white power'. He is clean of fear and terror. And when you become free of these things you become filled with anger. You strike out

for freedom. Anger is a manifestation that you know that you are right and you wish to tear down the system that enslaves you.

The questions debated within the Chicano movement and the links made with the outside are what must be developed. Self-determination is an expansive concept. It is not just cultural nationalism and heritage. Those are very important grounds. They are beginnings that absolutely have to be made. But self-determination for Chicanos is very central to the movement for self-determination in total, which is the essence of social revolution.

LA RAZA
By Chapo Covarrubias

We are La Raza – the race. Many people consider Chicanos to be on an ego trip because when they translate La Raza, we are calling ourselves **the** race. They are thereby disregarding all other interpretations of what might be.

But what Tijerina in New Mexico or Chavez and the farmworkers represent goes far beyond being **the race** in an ethnocentric way. Tijerina represents a landgrant movement and the fact that the government owns most of the land in New Mexico. It also involves co-ops being established in small pueblos. You make brooms and I will make hoes and plows. Together we will sell them to ourselves. If we make any money it will be to provide goods and foods for other people. These things are occuring in other places.

The farmworkers' struggle is La Raza. The food we are eating, if it wasn't for the Chicano, were all of the Chicanos pulled off jobs, how would America eat? If you control a man's breadbasket, he's gonna have to pay attention to your needs. You're in a very good position to force him to his knees. In the long run, a movement like Cesar Chavez's farmworkers is very much related to this. We're just talking about produce, but start counting the number of Spanish surnamed people working on cattle ranches. In the U.S. being a cowboy is not the most pleasant existence. Many of these positions are being held by Indians and Chicanos.

At a farmworkers strike in Borrego Springs a number of Brown Beret units came down to lend their support. Also, a large contingent of Black farmworkers who were trying to organize, formed a coalition with the Chicanos to exert pressure on the growers. Many MEChA groups on campus have a chairman in charge of keeping in contact with the farmworkers' union. Groups go up to Delano,

and Salinas with food in trucks. The movement is receiving support from various levels in the community – Brown Berets in the barrios, MEChA groups at colleges, semi-professional workers of the Mexican-American Political Association. Even the Catholic Church is trying to get back into the good graces of the Chicano community.

I want to let my father speak about the older generation of La Raza: 'The Community Service Organization (CSO) is an example of the gap between the Chicano today and the Chicano when I became active. The CSO was an instrument to fight the establishment. But we were not ready in those days of actually spouting about a revolution or anything like that. In fact in days of CSO I was considered a radical because of the fact that if we needed a street light, clean street, etc., and people said we will write a letter and ask them to please put a light in, I said, I am tired of asking, let's demand. And because I said demand, as against asking, I was considered a radical.

'I think the kids today in the high schools that have walked out,' would not have needed to do this if we the parents had done it years ago. But we didn't do it, so someone has to do it. The young people are doing it. Those who become educated are coming back to do something for the people in the barrios as against those few who made it before, getting their degrees, their practice, and moving out. This is the gap and I don't blame young people for distrusting older people.

'Some of the older generation came from Mexico. And what did we leave – nothing. Nothing but hunger, revolutions and so forth. We came to the U.S. and found job, picking grapes, working on railroad tracks, whatever. At least we were eating. So we said here is the promised land. Can we talk against someone who is feeding us? This is exactly how it was said. Now the young people who are going to school, are thinking for themselves. They say the hell with the old ways. They have done nothing for us. They want to change things.'

There are divisions among us. But the spiritual plan of Atzlan ties many of us together, from different backgrounds and ages. My father again talks about how he sees it. 'Atzlan, I don't think it means taking the Southwest part the U. S. took away from Mexico. We feel that this is our land and should not be given back to Mexico, but to us. Not necessarily throw the Anglo out, but this is our home and we have been treated like we are outsiders. This is the idea of Atzlan. We want to be able to make our living here. Today we have a feeling we are strangers, outsiders.'

I am not sure I agree with my father's concept of Atzlan. I know those concerned with cultural nationalism view Atzlan very differently. The active Chicano, what ever his idea of Atzlan, does not distinguish between U.S. Forest Rangers in New Mexico, the Texas Rangers in Crystal City, or the Los Angeles Police Department. There is no difference in the eyes of our people. They all represent an oppressive force whether it takes the form of pushing us off the street in front of our homes or whether it represents being forced to move our cattle off the U.S. forestry land. There is no distinction between these forces.

People criticize the Chicano movement for being splintered. I think that is wrong. There are a lot of different activities. We have people running for Congress who call themselves Chicanos. We have revolutionaries who say, 'Hey, man, we can't handle this with the establishment. Let's take it to the streets and ventilate.' I might think that some in the movement are just plugged-up individuals who just want to make it, or that occasionally the Brown Berets employ some of the same tactics they claim they are against. But groups do come together and the divisions seen in other movements do not exist as much in the Chicano community. We are part of a Bronze people on a Bronze continent.

Chicanas at Rally in Fresno, Calif. Courtesy La Raza Magazine

LA RAZA EN ACCION

El 29 de Agosto, 1970

"Mi pueblo alerta se había despertado: ancianos, jóvenes y niños. Veinticinco mil almas y yo entre ellas.¡Qué cosa tan linda!" Esto es lo que dice un joven Chicano tocante al "Moratorio Chicano" que tuvo lugar el mes de Agosto 1970 en el Este de Los Angeles.*

Durante la marcha teníamos órdenes de ocupar solamente la mitad de la calle, pero al poco rato ya íbamos por toda la calle. Nadie dijo nada. Los diputados del sheriff no se atrevieron a impedírnoslo. Esta vez éramos muchos.

Mientras marchábamos, hablábamos de nuestros corajes y contratiempos. Hablábamos de las humillaciones que por mucho tiempo guardábamos dentro de nosotros. Hoy nos la confiábamos uno al otro.

Los chotas con sus macanas, muy bien equipados y armados para combatir motines eran muy evidentes durante todo el curso de la marcha. No necesitaron mucho. Mucha de la gente que iba llegando al parque no tuvo la oportunidad de sentarse a escuchar a los oradores del día.

Un pequeño incidente ocurrió en una tienda de licores que está en la esquina del parque, cuando la policía trató de arrestar algunas personas.

*En el Suroeste es el movimiento Chicano. En el barrio español de Harlem se encuentran grupos de liberación como los "Young Lords." En Puerto Rico mismo hay un movimiento de "propia determinación". No importa su nombre específico; lo importante es que hay muchos movimientos de gente de color "bronceada". Ciertamente es un movimiento de todo un continente y tiene relación con la totalidad de la lucha del tercer mundo. Aquí consideramos y escuchamos el parte Chicano del movimiento.

En vez de mandar refuerzos moderados, los policías empezaron a llegar en fuerza como tropas, de todas partes del condado, dando órdenes de desocupar el parque, declarando que ésta era una asamblea ilegal. Dijeron que toda persona que no dejara el parque inmediatamente sería arrestada. No tuvimos, o más bien dicho, no se nos dió la oportunidad de retirarnos.

Había chotas en todas las salidas y bocacalles vecinas, ultrajando, insultando, golpeando y disparando gas a todos en general, sin importarles poco si eran hombres o mujeres, si eran viejos o jóvenes o niños de brazos.

Fue un terrible asalto que duró varios minutos. Los jóvenes trataron de combatir a la policía pero la policía seguía llegando en multitudes.

Ví a una señora con dos niñas como de 13 y 14 años de edad con las caras cubiertas con el gas 'mace'. Luego de lavarse la cara se sintieron algo mejor.

Yo tengo una hija de tres años, y ví en estas niñas lo que le podía pasar a mi hija un día. Me dió tanta rabia, que en aquel instante creo que podía haber matado a un policía. Me entró tanto odio contra los chotas que habría podido romperles la cabeza con mis puras manos.

Habla otro Chicano sobre los acontecimientos del 29 de Agosto:

La policía llegaba en autobuses dando un ambiente de: 'Vamos a los campos de guerra'. Algunos dicen que fue una acción extrema por parte de la policía. No es cierto; ya sabían con anticipo la acción que iban a tomar. La acción que tomaron fue premeditada.

Tenían todo el equipo y personaje. Era un plan de guerra bien ejecutado. Algunas personas se inquietaron porque varias de las tiendas y lugares de negocio de la calle Whittier, fueron saqueadas después que la policía se fue hacia el parque. La gente Chicana conoce mejor que nadie que un alto porcentaje de estas tiendas pertenecen a dueños que no viven en el barrio. Saben que una evaluación hecha de los precios, cosa por cosa, ya sea en tienda de abarrotes o tienda de ropa, enseñará que cuesta más ser pobre. Ellos saben los altos intereses que se cobran.

Durante la investigación sobre la muerte de Rubén Salazar, (Jornalista México-Americano que fue matado durante el Moratorio por un proyectil de gas lacrimógeno disparado por un diputado del sheriff), nadie refutó lo que los agentes del sheriff declararon, pero lo que nuestra gente decía era disputado a cada paso. Sin embargo, era claro y evidente lo que los agentes estaban cometiendo en nuestra comunidad.

Hebras del Movimiento

> La policía tal vez haya deshecho el Moratorio de una manera ya planeada y lo hizo ignominiosamente con el infame asesinato de Salazar, pero el 29 de Agosto, quedó al mismo tiempo una marca en el movimiento Chicano buscando determinación propia.
>
> Treinta mil almas fueron a las calles del Este de Los Angeles, viniendo de tan lejanas partes como Texas, Colorado y Nuevo México. Vinieron de todo el Sudoeste.
>
> El Moratorio se puede concebir como un tejido de muchas hechas del movimiento Chicano. Lo que es el movimiento hoy y su potencial y a dónde llegará, se puede ver mejor examinando los tres siguientes grupos: En Nuevo México el grupo encabezado por Reyes Tijerina, los trabajadores de campo en California y el levantamiento social en los barrios del Este de Los Angeles.

En Nuevo México un gran número de habitantes son campesinos. El movimiento para recobrar terrenos es contra el gobierno federal que es el dueño de miles de acres.

La lucha no es para reclamar terrenos individualmente sino para hacer uso de dichos terrenos como pasto común para ganado de habitantes de las aldeas y los pueblitos del noroeste de Nuevo México.

Los campesinos participan porque consideran la tierra como clave de la existencia del pueblo.

Tienen que luchar contra el gobierno porque no es tierra privada sino del gobierno y que se les ha prohibido usar.

En California la lucha de los campesinos no es el recobro de tierras como en Nuevo México. El empuje del labrador Chicano es el de conseguir mejores salarios por su trabajo de mano de obra y mejores condiciones de vivir.

Por muchos años los dueños de ranchos y granjas han abusado del trabajador mexicano, pagándoles lo más mínimo posible y proporcionándole lo menos posible en cuestión de viviendas e higiene. La agricultura, una industria multimillonaria, es la más grande industria de California.

La huelga empezó cuando los obreros de campo tuvieron la temeridad de decir a los patrones: "No, ya no trabajaremos por los sueldos que ustedes eligen pagar sin que nadie los dispute".

Cuando estalló la huelga había en los cofres huelguistas la gran cantidad de $85.00. Ochenta y cinco dólares de los huelguistas contra millones de los dueños. ¿Cómo era posible ganar? Sin embargo han ganado numerosas veces en las viñas, comprobando que la fuerza humana es una cosa magnífica.

César Chávez y los obreros han enseñado que el secreto de la victoria no es tanto el dinero como el esfuerzo humano que tiene la fortaleza de decir 'NO' y unirse para conseguir lo que es justo. La campaña de la huelga no es solo un combate laborista sino también una lucha de derechos civiles. La lucha del trabajador Chicano no es una lucha para sí mismo solamente, es una lucha de beneficio para todos los obreros.
Así que, de los colegios, estudiantes Chicanos; de los barrios, los Brown Berets y del sudoeste miles de México-Americanos acudieron a dar apoyo a la huelga, no comprando en los mercados que vendían uvas no sancionadas por la unión de trabajadores agrícolas o mandando ropa y comestibles a las familias huelguistas en Delano.

¡La huelga! ha revivificado el movimiento obrerista en general y ha sido una de las hebritas en el tejido de la lucha Chicana.

El Movimiento Chicano en las ciudades, especialmente en el Este de Los Angeles. ¿Qué forma ha tomado aquí? La explosión estudiantil de las High Schools (escuelas secundarias), Los Brown Berets, El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, la revista LA RAZA, el Comité Chicano Moratorio y La Raza Unida. Estas son varias de las formas que ha tomado el movimiento Chicano.

La Raza Unida está organizando un partido político. El comité obrero de La Raza Unida apoya al trabajador cuando está en huelga y en boycoteo. Este movimiento polítttico está alcanzando a gran número en la comunidad, especialmente a la juventud.

Se pregunta si lo que hicieron los jóvenes con la huelga en las escuelas fue nada más que un pasatiempo, o si tiene alguna conexión o afinidad con el movimiento Chicano.

Jóvenes estudiantes de Roosevelt High hablan de sus actividades cuando salieron de las escuelas:

> El viernes todos estábamos en la escuela. Antes de la tercera clase nos juntamos cerca del auditorio para presentar nuestras demandas que incluían que se retirara la policía de las escuelas, que las puertas a los patios de la escuela permanecieran abiertas, que se sirviera mejor comida, y que se nos permitiera tener voz

en los asuntos de la escuela.

El asistente del principal se rehusó a hablar con nosotros, diciendo que no discutía nada con un motín.
Eramos cerca de 300 y otros estudiantes salieron del edificio para apoyarnos. La policía inmediatamente declaró nuestra asamblea 'ilegal' y amenazó con atacarnos. Nueve muchachas se cogieron de brazo en brazo formando una cadena tratando de impedir a la policía, pero éstos las jalaron y ultrajaron quebrando la cadena a la fuerza. Los administradores México-Americanos de la escuela Roosevelt expulsaron a 37 de nosotros. La policía se comportó brutalmente como lo hacen siempre, tirando a las muchachas del pelo y torciéndoles los brazos.
Lo que sucedió en la Roosevelt se puede comprender si se conoce la calidad de educación de esta escuela. No es educación, es embeber la mente con sus doctrinas. De los 3,200 estudiantes, el 80% son Chicanos. El plantel produce estudiantes graduados que apenas saben leer y escribir. El sistema fuerza al 75% a que tomen cursos vocacionales y no académicos.

¿Qué posición tiene el movimiento Chicano en términos de "Chicanos contra Anglos"?

Es una pregunta muy importante, pero más importante es: ¿Cuáles son las relaciones de una sección de la comunidad mexicana a la otra?

Una joven Chicana lo expresa así:

No sé yo si el movimiento en general quiere llegar a los extremos que quiero yo. Porque el movimiento incluye a gente mayor y muchos de ellos no desean ser libres.

Los Brown Berets es otro segmento del movimiento en Los Angeles. Una señora de edad media habla favorablemente de los Brown Berets, refiriéndose a un incidente que presenció, en el cual los Brown Berets cogieron a un joven Chicano que le había arrebatado la bolsa de mano a una señora, y, en lugar de entregarlo a la policía, lo castigaron ellos mismos, obligándolo a trabajar en actividades de la comunidad. Muchas personas temen el militarismo de los Brown Berets.

Dicen que el concepto de Aztlán es el eslabón que une a los grupos de Tijerina, a los trabajadores del campo, al Este de Los Angeles, Crystal City, Texas, y a los activistas Chicanos de Denver. Pero hay muchas otras interpretaciones. ¿Quieren recobrar terrenos? ¿Quieren poner alto al ultraje de la

policía al pueblo del Este de Los Angeles por medio de organizaciones como "The Barrio Defense Committee?" ¿Quieren ayudar a la Unión de Obreros Campesinos? ¿Quieren que el pueblo mexicano tenga voz y determinación propia?

Finalmente, en términos de un cambio social en América debe existir cierta unidad entre el movimiento Chicano y otros grupos fuera de la comunidad, especialmente el movimiento Negro, que sin duda durante los años 1960-1967 ha servido de inspiración para el movimiento Chicano.

Cuando Tijerina habla en las aldeas de Nuevo México hace referencia al Negro:

> Miren al Negro cómo ya se ha liberado. Ya es libre de espíritu. Libre del temor que le tenía al hombre blanco. Ya no tiene miedo ni terror. Cuando uno pierde el miedo se llena de ira. Sin miedo uno puede combatir al sistema que lo ha mantenido esclavizado.

El debate entre grupos del movimiento es: ¿Qué pasos se deben dar para ir adelante? ¿Cuál es el desarrollo que se debe obtener?

No es solamente el nacionalismo cultural o la herencia cultural de nuestros antepasados. Estas son cosas que se deben adquirir. Lo más importante es la determinación propia total del pueblo mexicano, en otras palabras, una revolución social.

LA RAZA—QUIEN SOMOS

Por Chapo Covarrubias

> Somos La Raza. — Muchos creen que el Chicano va en una gira de egoísmo porque decimos 'La Raza', que nos creemos superiores. Con esta mala interpretación omiten lo que la raza verdaderamente es.
>
> Lo que los grupos de Tijerina y Chávez representan va más allá de ser la raza en un sentido étnico. Tijerina representa el movimiento para recobrar terrenos y el hecho de que el Gobierno es el dueño de la mayoría de las tierras en Nuevo México. También existen grupos cooperativos en los pequeños pueblos. 'Tú haces escobas y yo hago azadones y arados. Los vendemos a nosotros mismos. Si tenemos ganancia podemos proveer a otros con ropa y alimento.'
> Esto ocurre en muchos otros lugares. Esto es la raza.

La lucha de los obreros de campo es la raza. El Chicano es responsable de la cosecha de alimentos. Sin la obra de mano del mexicano la nación sufriría graves consecuencias. Quitarle al hombre la comida es la manera más eficaz de hacerlo rendirse. El movimiento de Chávez y los obreros es muy relativo a todo esto. Sólo hemos hablado de la producción de verduras y frutas, pero en los ranchos y otras industrias hallaremos muchas personas con apellidos hispanos que desempeñan estos trabajos. El ser vaquero no es una existencia envidiable, y muchos de estos puestos son desempeñados por Chicanos e Indios.

En la huelga de campesinos en Borrego Springs, un número de unidades de los Brown Berets vino a prestar apoyo. También un contingente de trabajadores Negros de campo, tratando de formar una coalición con los Chicanos, ejerció gran presión sobre los dueños. Grupos en los colegios tienen delegados encargados de mantenerse en contacto con la Unión de Obreros. Otros grupos van a Delano y Salinas llevando alimentos y ropa. El movimiento ha recibido ayuda de varios niveles de la comunidad: de los Brown Berets en los barrios, de Mecha y otros en los colegios, de trabajadores semiprofesionales de MAPA (Partido Político México-Americano), y muchos otros. Hasta la iglesia Católica ha prestado su apoyo. Esta es La Raza.

Mi padre habla sobre La Raza durante su generación:
"La Organización de Servicio a la Comunidad (CSO) es un ejemplo de la brecha entre el Chicano de mi tiempo y el Chicano de hoy.

"La CSO fue formada con la idea de combatir al establecimiento para mejorar la comunidad. En esos tiempos todavía no estábamos listos para mejorar la comunidad. En esos tiempos todavía no estábamos listos para borbotar de revolución, o tales frases. En efecto yo era considerado radical simplemente porque cuando pedíamos que se nos compusiera una calle o que se instalara una luz, decíamos, por favor, dénos ésto o lo otro, y yo, cansado de pedir, decía que debíamos demandar, no pedir. Porque yo quería usar la palabra demandar en lugar de pedir, era un militante radical.

"Creo que los jóvenes que se salieron de las escuelas para hacerse oír no tendrían que haberlo hecho si nosotros, los padres, hubiéramos hecho algo en años pasados.
'Se tiene que hacer y la juventud lo está haciendo. Ahora aquellos mexicanos que se están educando, graduando de las universidades y colegios, están regresando a los barrios donde se crearon para tratar de mejorar la comunidad. Esto no lo hacían en mi era. Los pocos que, de alguna manera u otra recibían una educación, cuando graduaban del colegio se marchaban a vivir en otros lugares más opulentos y se olvidaban para siempre de su 'gente'. Esta es la brecha que existe entre el

joven y el viejo. No culpo a la juventud el no tener confianza en los más viejos que ellos.

"Algunos de la generación pasada venimos de México. ¿Qué dejamos allá? Nada. Sólo hambre, revoluciones, etc. Venimos a los Estados Unidos y encontramos trabajo, pizcando fruta, en el 'traque' y en lo que fuera. Ganando de menos para comer, nos dijimos, 'Esta es la tierra prometida'. No es posible herir la mano que nos alimenta. Ahora la juventud se está educando y aprendiendo pensar por sí mismo y dice: 'Al diablo con los modos viejos, no han hecho nada de beneficio para nosotros'. La juventud quiere y debe cambiar las cosas.

"La idea de Aztlán, no creo que sea el recobrar el terreno del sudoeste que los Estados Unidos quitaron a México. Para mí quiere decir que ésta es nuestra tierra, no para regresársela a México, sino para nosotros. No quiere decir tampoco que debemos expulsar al Anglo. Esta es nuestra tierra, nuestro hogar, y nos hacen sentirnos como intrusos. Esto creo yo es la idea de Aztlan. Queremos poder ganar la vida aquí sin sentirnos como extranjeros, como de afuera".

No creo estar de acuerdo con mi padre sobre su concepto de Aztlán, pero él dice las cosas como él las ve. Existen entre todos nosotros divididas opiniones. Yo creo que el plan espiritual de Aztlán nos ha unido aunque seamos de diferentes familias o diversas edades.

Sé que aquellos interesados con el nacionalismo cultural miran al concepto de Aztlán muy diferentemente. El activista Chicano, cualquiera que sea su nación de Aztlán, no distingue entre los Forest Rangers de Nuevo México, los Texas Rangers de Crystal City o el departamento de policía en Los Angeles. No hay ninguna diferencia en los ojos de nuestra gente.

Todos ellos representan para nosotros una fuerza opresiva, ya sea que nos empujen de la calle que da frente a nuestras casas o que nos obliguen a sacar nuestro ganado de las tierras del gobierno. No hay ninguna distinción entre estas fuerzas. El público critica al movimiento Chicano de estar compuesto de demasiados segmentos diferentes. Esto no es justo, porque hay muchas diferentes actividades. Tenemos personas aspirantes a servir en el Congreso que se llaman Chicanos. Tenemos revolucionarios que dicen, "Hombre, no la podemos hacer con el establecimiento, tenemos que tirarnos a la calle y echar plomazos". Tal vez mi opinión sea que algunos en el movimiento son sólo individuos tapados que nomás lo hacen por 'pertenecer', o que ocasionalmente los Brown Berets usan las mismas tácticas de los cuales dicen estar en contra. Pero sí que hay cierta unidad entre los grupos. La división es más evidente en otros grupos que en la comunidad chicana. Somos un pueblo de Bronce en un continente de Bronce.

Not an Ending/but a New Beginning

No one can give a blueprint for the answers to what is ahead for the 1970's, because the crisis is so deep and immense. There is such a crisis in labor, and outside of labor, that Black workers are searching every day for ways to meet the problems of society. That is the reason we have Black caucuses. Black workers have participated for years in caucuses led by white workers, and controlled by white workers, and it didn't get them anywhere near to the surface of the problems in production, and in life as a whole.

The economic situation today is in a worse crisis than ever in history, and it has everybody frightened. Workers are frightened because they don't know what the outcome is going to be. What we need is a direction -- not answers, but a direction wherein workers, welfare people, all kinds of people could see that this is the road they have to take, to find their own answers.

The intellectuals and analysts don't see what is really taking place. They don't recognize the seriousness of the crisis, which has gripped the whole country. If they would just look, they would begin to ask themselves what would have happened ten years ago to any Black in the South who would have dared to vote, much less run for office. Yet in the past few years Black have been able — through their own activity — to run Black candidates for local, city, and state office, without fear of getting killed. There may be some fear, and there is still much caution — but they have made such great changes politically and economically that they can do it. It is not that any Blacks believe, even if they get the Black candidates elected, that this is the solution to all their problems.

They know that the crisis is of such a nature that the answer is not in just the ballot box. Black people are fully aware that we don't have the strength to elect Black candidates for President or Governor. But the fact that one has the ability to run, makes us feel we have to give our support.

Even more, it's a question of opening up the whole American political stage on a new scene. When Evers runs for Governor, and Chisholm runs for President, something new has happened. It isn't a question of their winning, or even a question of whether Blacks prefer them to some other Blacks. It is that in asserting our Blackness, we are putting everything on a new beginning.

If most Blacks felt that the answer to the crisis they face would come through electing a white, they would just as soon vote for him as a Black. Here is where the Black extremists hurt the struggle more than help it, when they insist we have to vote for a Black, just because he is Black.

It is the economic crisis that's going to force the white worker to examine their prejudices. Neither Nixon nor any other administration can solve the economic crisis. I don't care how many abstract figures they give about unemployment "declining." Everyday the crisis gets deeper. And its going to hit white workers in such a way that they are going to have to forget their prejudices.

I also blame the union a lot for the white workers' thinking. The union leaders were always afraid to touch a lot of these questions; they always kept quiet. One reason for deep polarization in the labor movement today is that the leadership never came out fairly and frankly for open discussion. the divisions that were there between white and Black before the CIO, disappeared on the picket lines and in the shops as the workers fought together.

How can we unite around a philosophy — a Marxist-Humanist freedom philosphy? How can we make sure that we connect theory and practice?

This lack of connection is the trouble. This is the cause of the crisis, and why it is so severe — people have been looking for a direction, and everything they have grasped has led them to the stone wall at the end, instead of an open road. Because all these things are political questions, they have to have political answers. And the correct political conclusion.

Workers will know from their own experiences, and their own activities whether the conclusion is correct. This is how your philosophy is tested.

The point is, how do you relate what you have just read in this pamphlet to what you are thinking, to what you are doing, whether it is the factory, or on the campus, whether it is on the reservation or with the urban Indian

community, whether it is with the Chicanos in the cultural movement or as part of the anti-war movement, whether it is part of Women's Liberation or any other movement of opposition to this exploitative, racist society under which we all live?

How can we all unite our experiences in such a way that act and fact go in the same direction, so that finally society can be changed from the bottom?

It is long past high noon. There is no time to waste. We must work it out together – now, not tomorrow, but today. Together we will work out a unity of theory and practice so that freedom does not remain just an idea, but becomes a reality. We must begin at once to do things together by using this liberation philosophy as foundation for all else till freedom is achieved.

Charles Denby,
Editor, **News & Letters**

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